

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 TUNIS 00317 171154Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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R 171100Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7961

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 0317

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (PRESIDENT HABIB BOURGUIBA)

SUBJECT: GOT REQUESTS RESCHEDULING OF BOURGUIBA VISIT TO MAY

REF: TUNIS 7722

1. DURING JANUARY 16 MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER CHATTI, WHICH HE HAD REQUESTED, CHATTI TOLD ME THAT PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA WISHES, IF AT ALL POSSIBLE, TO RESCHEDULE HIS OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE U.S. FROM APRIL TO FIRST WEEK IN MAY. CHATTI SAID THAT REASON FOR REQUESTED CHANGE WAS EXPECTED VISIT OF SUDANESE PRESIDENT NUMEIRI TO TUNIS IN LATE APRIL. I REMINDED CHATTI THAT PRIME MINISTER NOUIRA HAD RECENTLY CONFIRMED TO ME, FOLLOWING TALK WITH BOURGUIBA, THAT APRIL WAS ACCEPTABLE MONTH FOR VISIT (REFTEL). I AGREED, HOWEVER, TO FORWARD LATEST REQUEST TO WASHINGTON, CAUTIONING CHATTI THAT PRESIDENT FORD'S SCHEDULE FOR MAY MAY ALREADY BE FULL AND A READJUSTMENT MAY NOT BE POSSIBLE. CHATTI SAID THAT IF THIS WERE THE CASE, NUMEIRI'S TRIP WOULD HAVE TO BE CHANGED AND BOURGUIBA COULD GO TO WASHINGTON INSTEAD DURING THE LATTER HALF OF APRIL. HE SAID THAT DURING THE FIRST HALF OF APRIL PRIME MINISTER NOUIRA WOULD BE ON AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO PEKING.

2. I REGRET THAT TUNISIANS HAVE CHANGED SIGNALS. I ALSO REGRET THAT THE PRIME MINISTER FAILED TO REMEMBER (WHEN HE TOLD ME COUPLE OF WEEKS AGO THAT ANYTIME IN APRIL
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WOULD BE CONVENIENT FOR BOURGUIBA'S VISIT TO U.S.) THAT

HIS OWN VISIT TO CHINA DURING FIRST HALF OF THAT MONTH
WOULD PRECLUDE BOURGUIBA'S BEING ABSENT FROM TUNISIA AT
THAT TIME. IF WHITE HOUSE IS UNABLE TO SCHEDULE BOURGUIBA
IN EARLY MAY AND IF SECOND HALF OF APRIL IS CONVENIENT, I
WOULD SEE NO PROBLEM IN TELLING TUNISIANS THAT LATTER TIME
FRAME IS ONLY POSSIBLE ONE.
SEELYE

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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